

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN SCOTLAND IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

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WHEN Charles II. ascended the throne in 1660, the Jesuits were well acquainted with the disposition of the King and hailed his coronation as a glorious opportunity for recovering Scotland for the Roman Church. They availed themselves of his accession to the full extent, and succeeded in making serious inroad on the solidarity of Scottish Presbyterianism. In doing so they laid the foundation of that Roman power which to-day is challenging Protestant Scotland. How they made this advance, and to what extent, is the object of this paper.

I

The Counter-Reformation was inaugurated in great hopes, but its leaders discovered that by political intrigue and open rebellion Scotland could not be violently replaced in the bosom of the Mother Church. Sobered opinion, while never abandoning those weapons, concentrated on the less visionary and more practical object of having the Roman Episcopate restored in Scotland.¹ Several factors contributed to the success of this plan. For one thing, the "Toleration" during the Protectorate was of great advantage to them: although it was not extended to Romanism, it did not prevent any of its adherents from propagating their faith, provided they kept the supremacy of the Pope and the Hierarchy in the background. With the "Toleration" all the penal laws that compelled their attendance at Protestant services had been placed in abeyance, and they could therefore meet in private houses without coming under Church censure with its attendant penalties. Further, taking full advantage of the divisions of Protestantism, they sedulously aimed at undermining the Protestant seat of authority, and not without success.² Jesuits and seminary priests as well as exiled Roman Catholics kept flowing into the country, while those who stayed

¹ I. H. Pollen, S.J. : *Counter-Reformation in Scotland*, p. 76.

² *Naphthali*, p. 183.

at home, compromising by outward conformity, boldly unmasked themselves and declared their allegiance to Rome.¹ There was also an easy and free distribution of Roman Catholic literature. Moreover, the great variety of opinions on religious questions introduced by the sectaries from England, had by 1653 given rise to such general confusion that "many are led to prefer the immoveable firmness of the Roman Rock."²

By 1657 so successful were the Jesuits and seculars with their propaganda that a considerable number of the nobility and people of rank, some three or four ministers, who were sons of bishops, and some University professors, embraced the Roman faith. Even as early as 1629 Rome had begun to organise by proposing that her missionaries in Scotland should be supervised by a native superior. Hot rivalry between the secular clergy and the Jesuits for a time rendered the proposal abortive.³ But the known practical sympathy of Charles I. and his son with Roman Catholic aspirations, as well as the impetus given to the tireless efforts of the Roman missionaries, conspired to push forward the movement in the direction of episcopal government. Accordingly the Congregation of Propaganda, viewing hopefully the situation in Scotland, determined in 1653 to consolidate their gains, and organise their missionaries by incorporating the secular clergy under the jurisdiction of a Prefect.

The Scottish secular clergy, Walker, Lumsden, Crichton, Smith and Ballantyne, under the last as Prefect, were thus set free from the unpopular jurisdiction of English prelates and Jesuits. Ballantyne, who was the son of the minister of Douglas, Lanarkshire, obtained his early education in Edinburgh. While travelling in France he was received into the Roman Catholic Church in Paris,⁴ and afterwards pursued his studies at Rome and in the Scots College at Paris. He was the first Prefect-apostolic in Scotland after the Reformation, and his appointment, which carried with it high ecclesiastical authority, was a signal victory for Rome. The first milestone in the successful advance towards the restoration of the Romish Hierarchy in Scotland was thus fixed firmly.

Another victory of great importance as marking the beginning of the educational organisation of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland to-day was gained when two Roman Catholic Schools were erected in 1675, one in Glengarry and the other in Barra. They were situated in the territories of Macdonald and MacNeill, and were carried on under their protection and fostering care without molestation from the ruling powers. But loyal as Roman Catholics were, Father Winster convinced

¹ *Naphtali*, p. 183; *Lives of Henderson and Guthrie*, pp. 261, 265.

² Forbes Leith: *Memoirs*, II, 56, 57.

³ Æneas M'Donnell Dawson: *The Catholics of Scotland*, p. 68.

⁴ Bellesheim: *Hist.*, IV, 42, 43, 49; Dawson: *op. cit.*, pp. 68, 69.

the Cardinals, by a simple lesson in geography, of the impracticability of obeying their command to have all Roman Catholic children taught in these schools, saying, with perhaps pardonable exaggeration, that it would be as feasible to have them trained in Jamaica.¹ But he does not complain of any compelling or restraining force from the Government, and in effect asks for sympathy and resources to build more schools at such an opportune time.

The Jesuits and other regulars, who in number and success out-rivalled the seculars, only tardily and with wounded pride recognised Ballantyne's authority. Hitherto the Pope was the episcopal pastor of Scotland, for he claimed to be the apostolic bishop of every land. From this date he was represented by a Prefect-apostolic with full episcopal power, even although Ballantyne was not a consecrated bishop, a fact which was particularly galling to the dignity of the Jesuits. Ballantyne, however, ignored them and as a competent organiser he set to work. He prescribed spheres of labour for the secular priests, and set certain limitations on the activities of the Jesuits who hitherto regarded themselves as possessing a roaming commission. There was room for this organisation, and it marks the beginning of organised Roman Catholicism in reformed Scotland. Of the Highlands and Islands this is specially true, for there alone the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church were sufficiently numerous to justify the residence of a priest.

II

How the Roman Catholic Church secured a footing in the Highlands and Islands is not, perhaps, sufficiently understood. Certain facts help to elucidate what is to some a matter of wonder. The first is that to escape penal obligations, the Roman Catholic missionaries fled to inaccessible parts of the country, where with uncurtailed freedom they could propagate their faith. Another fact not so well known is that Irish ecclesiastics did not regard the Reformation as having destroyed the ancient obligations and relations between the two portions of what was once one Kingdom. Blood relationship between descendants of Somerled of the Isles² on both sides of the Irish Sea helped to keep alive a community of religious as well as political interests.³ In view of these facts the Irish Churchmen doubtless felt that a call, similar to that which came to St Columba, reached their ears and afforded them an

¹ *Scotichronicon*, IV, p. xi. ; Bellesheim, IV, 119 ; Dawson, p. 83.

² Cf. Eoin MacNeill : *Phases of Irish History*, pp. 214 ff.

³ Certain lands in Islay are described as belonging to the Abbacy of Derry. How they were mortified is stated in a letter of 16th April 1659 in the Inveraray Charter Room, *Highland Papers*, III (S.H.S.), n. 2, p. 67.

opportunity of showing their zeal and winning fame by reclaiming the Islesmen for the Roman Church. In any case Irish missionaries who were ecclesiastically subject to the Archbishop of Armagh appeared in the Western Isles as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century.

A few years later the zealous Archbishop of Dublin sent over certain Franciscans—Cornelius Ward, O'Neill and Patrick Hagerty. Ward laboured in the Hebrides and claimed to have reconciled to the Church 382 heretics. With the help of Patrick Brady, another of their order, they are alleged to have "converted" "ten thousand heretics in Scotland."¹ At first the Cardinals at Rome seemed to have been suspicious of the truth of such an extraordinary success, but apparently they were persuaded to accept it. Another report from Scotland in 1628 put down the number of "converts" directly traceable to their efforts at 10,269. In 1633, Brady is claimed to have "reconciled" 229 persons to the Church in the Hebrides alone, besides marrying 117 couples, and baptizing 1222 persons.²

In 1638 Cardinal Pamfili, afterwards Pope Innocent X., reported that Ward had 1074 "converts" to his credit during the two years 1636 and 1637, as well as 191 baptisms and 31 marriages. Ward sent a similar report to the Bishop of Down and Connor under whose jurisdiction he must have served. In it he does not forget to enhance his success by graphically picturing his "indescribable labour" "in those remote and barbarous spots [Hebrides] . . . beyond the belief of the Romans," "where there is no city, no town, no school, no civilization."³ He evidently was anxious to make a good impression, and in his effort he supplied facts that are damaging to his own figures. The population of the Hebrides has enormously increased since the erection of fishing villages and towns towards the end of the eighteenth century; yet the total of the figures quoted is much larger than the entire population to-day. Further, we have the definite statement that in 1672 in England, with its very much larger population and relatively much larger number of unreformed Roman Catholics, "the Papists, upon a survey of them, *conformists* and non-conformists severally, were found throughout England to be under 27,000, men, women and children; in Scotland the disproportion is greater on the protestant side."⁴

There were other missionaries besides the Franciscans at work in

¹ Bellesheim, IV, 66, 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴ *Three Great Questions concerning the Succession and the Dangers of Popery, fully examined in a Letter to a Member of this present Parliament*, London, 1680, p. 17. England and Scotland had then between them a population of about seven millions—G. M. Trevelyan: *Hist. England*, 1926, p. 490. According to the survey of the *Letter* the number of Roman Catholics in Scotland could not be more than between 4000 and 5000.

the Outer Isles and the Mainland. French Lazarists were appealed to by Propaganda to furnish missionaries. St Vincent de Paul naturally pointed out the uselessness of sending Frenchmen whose acquaintance with English or Gaelic was hopelessly meagre, but volunteers were secured who insisted that the knowledge of one language was sufficient. Accordingly St Vincent dispatched two Irish priests to the Hebrides and a Scottish priest to the mainland. One of these was Father Duggan, who reported on his labours in the Western Isles in the years 1652 and 1654. He indicated precisely what Western Isles he visited. They were Uist, Canna, Eigg and Skye—on the mainland he worked in Moidart, Arisaig, Knoydart and Glengarry. These he regarded “as most of the Islands”¹ and as he gave instructions in Christian doctrine to the inhabitants, it is clear that these are the Hebrides in which the multitude already referred to were converted. In 1669 the mission was entrusted to the Archbishop of Armagh who personally visited the islands and sent an interesting report of his diligence to Propaganda in 1671. But more interesting still and more illuminating was the report sent by Alexander Winster, already referred to, a native of Morayshire, whose real name was Dunbar. He was appointed successor to Ballantyne in 1662. He discloses the important fact that owing to the toleration and the leniency shown to Roman Catholics by Charles II. and his Parliaments, and the encouragement given them by the priests to evade the laws, the people ceased from what he terms “the damnable intercourse with hereticks in common meetings.”² Mass was celebrated and sermons were preached in private houses or in the open fields with unrestrained liberty.

The Congregation of Propaganda was keeping a watchful eye on the progress of the missionaries, and did everything possible to encourage their efforts. To obtain a fuller report of the situation a further visitor, Alexander Leslie, was sent to Scotland with elaborate and detailed instructions. Leslie travelled through all Scotland, and his report, which was submitted to Propaganda in 1681, is worthy of close attention. He found 14,000 communicants in Scotland, and of these 12,000 were in the Highlands and Islands alone. In the Lowlands the adherents of the Roman faith were distributed as follows: in Galloway, 550; in Glasgow and the neighbourhood, 50; in Forfarshire, 72; in Aberdeenshire, 450; in Banffshire, 1000; and in Morayshire, 28.³ Vast tracts of Scotland seem therefore to have been barren of results, in spite of the constant and persistent efforts of the Jesuits. It is not without keen disappointment that he admits the fact. “Your Eminences,” he wrote, “can see from the result of the visitation, that most of the provinces are altogether infected with heresy.” One remedy, among others suggested by him,

¹ Bellesheim, IV, 83.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 118.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

is significant. It is that the missionaries should be disciplined and kept in order and under authority so that the "Church . . . may not be sullied by domestic scandals and contentions within . . . that missionaries should be dismissed when there was danger of scandal, and the root of the contentions and disagreements between the secular and regular missionaries be effectively dealt with." ¹

III

Are these figures of Leslie, which have hitherto been accepted without challenge, correct or even approximately so? Both an indirect and a direct answer can be given from reliable sources, some of which were not accessible to Bellesheim, or his translator.

After the Restoration the Privy Council, two-thirds of whose business had direct bearing on Church matters, made the disquieting discovery that Papists were more numerous and active than they had been during the reigns of James VI. and Charles I. Accordingly, on the 19th October 1661 a stiff proclamation was issued. Its contents reveal the intensive propaganda carried on by the Roman Catholics. "The horrid confusion," it said, "introduced into the Church and State by sectaries," had led the Roman Catholics to entertain "great hopes" of a "great increase of their numbers and advancement of their designs," and hence, according to the Council, their present endeavours "to trace their old steps, and to imbroil that order and government restored to us by Almighty God." ²

While this proclamation establishes the contention that the toleration was abused to their own advantage by Roman Catholics, it conceals the important fact that Charles' own known sympathies stimulated their new activities. Following the proclamation of Council orders were issued to the Bishops, and frequently repeated, to supply "lists of Papists." These came in slowly: the first, and one of the most detailed now extant, was from the Synod of Aberdeen in 1661. It was formidable enough as far as the nobility were concerned, for it contained the names of "The Lady Marquis of Huntly, with her children and whole family; Viscount of Frendraucht with his bretheren and childrein; the Laird and Lady Drum, their childrein and family; the Laird of Geight, childrein and brether; the Laird of Fedderat, younger; the Laird of Pitfodells; the Laird of Fetterneir, lady and family;" and about a dozen of the smaller lairds and "ane great number more." ³ Although this

¹ Bellesheim, pp. 357, 359.

² *Reg. Priv. Coun. Scot.*, I (Ser. III), 1661-4, p. xxii.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 90.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66.

list is valuable, it is not detailed enough to allow a close comparison to be made with Winster's or Leslie's lists. It was an not easy or safe business for the Bishops or their clergy to secure such lists. As evidence of the difficulty we find the Bishop of the Isles supplicating redress from the Privy Council for himself and his clergy in 1666. In this supplication he speaks of "having planted the most of all the isles within the diocie with able and painfull ministers, who, in obedience to the ordour of the synod holden at Icolmkill in the year 1666, were goeing about ther dewtie to report to the synod ther diligence in processing some few papists, the most considerable in these bounds, the number not exceeding foure."¹ In 1662 the Archdeanery of the Isles, which included Skye, Eigg, Rum, Muck and Canna, had been created.² The Bishop then proceeds to give interesting details about the zeal of one of his clergy. He tells how Rev. Donald Nicolson of Kilmuir, Skye, the head of the house of Scurrybreac, who, as he could control his own numerous family of twenty-five sons and daughters, thought he could reclaim the warlike Archibald M'Donald, brother to Sir James M'Donald of Sleat, "frae his errors." All his efforts having been to no purpose, "att last [Nicolson] was necessitat to proceid ecclesiastically against him with the censures of the Church, and haveing proceided to the last prayer, the said Archibald M'Donald³ upon ane Sunday at night betwixt twelff and one a clock, in a most barbarous manner, invaded the house of this minister. . . . He assaulted him in his bed with a drawn durk, pulling him out of bed be the hair of the head . . . He would no question have murdered him had not the good hand of God, restrained his wicked resolution." Of this "barbarous" act Archibald boasted, with the result that "all the papists with the recuseants in these bounds are mightilie encouraged in so far that some of them have said they would not care much to stob a minister for their religion and thereafter take banishment." The incident was alarming enough for Donald Nicolson, and the Bishop was apparently anxious for the safety of his clergy, but the Privy Council, either connived, or, because they knew the facts and the numerical strength of the papists within the bounds, took a less serious view of the situation, and merely put Archibald M'Donald, though he was a reputed murderer, "under caution to keep the King's peace."⁴

The diocese named included the Hebrides and Isles in which Hagerty,

¹ *Reg. Priv. Coun. Scot.*, II, p. 323.

² *Acts Scot. Parl.*, VII.

³ This is *An Ciaran Mabach*, who warbles with great tenderness in Gaelic verses of unusual beauty and charm—*cf. The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry*, pp. 53, 54, 55. For his complicity in the gruesome affair of the "Well of the Seven Heads," *cf. Mackay: Clan Warfare*, pp. 232 *et seq.*

⁴ *Reg. Priv. Coun. Scot.*, II, Ser. III, p. 323.

Ward, Gall, Winster and Leslie had reported their remarkable success. It was planted, according to the Bishop, by "able and painfull ministers," and had an Archdeanery, all of which organisation must imply a community of interested people. But of the 12,000 reputed Roman Catholics in the islands, the Bishop mentioned only four, and not all of these were leaders of a numerous following. He gives no indication that the situation was as alarming to Protestantism as the priests' reports implied, even although it would have strengthened his appeal to exaggerate the number of the papists. Heavily as the silence of the Bishop weighs against the reports of the priests, fortunately that is not all we have to rely on for their confutation. A small scrap of paper,¹ darkly coloured with the years and clearly a rough copy of one of the returns called for by the Privy Council, survives to bear its witness. Its title is: "A List of Papists in ye Highlands," and in the corner is "1698." The list gives the names of the proprietors with their religious persuasion, and the number of papists in their territories, as follows:—"Papist, Earl of Seafort, Lewis, 5; Protest. Sir Donald M'Donald, North Uist, 1; Papist, Ronald M'Donald, Benbecula 200; Macdonald of Moydort, papist, South Uist, 1100; Mackneill, papist, Barray, 440; Sir Donald M'Donald, Skie, 14; M'Donald of Moydort, papist, Egg, 200; Cannay, 110; Protestant, M'Lean, Muck, 4; Duke of Argyle pop [sic], Mull, 7; M'Donald, papist Moron [Morar] 200; M'Donald, papist, Knodort [Knoydart] 260; Gengarry, 680; Prot. Lochaber, 30; Prot. and papist, Badenoch and D[uke of] Gordon's, 1300; and Fochabers and Inverness and 6 miles about it, 36; Ross-shire, 15; Braymarr, 60." After Inverness the figures "530" are scored out and "36" placed above as if the writer had made a mistake in his copy and had corrected it. At the foot of this interesting manuscript is the illuminating note: "the pope pays each priest five lib. sterl. for each proselyte he makes."²

We have here, then, a total of 4662 Roman Catholics as against Leslie's aggregate of 12,000 in the same area. If we deduct the districts Leslie himself regards as Lowland, viz: 60 for Braemar, and half at least of the numbers for Fochabers, most of whom perverted in the reign of James VII, the number of Roman Catholics in the areas under notice drops to about 4000.

If the figures given for Ross-shire and Inverness town and district, fifty-one altogether, seem too small, corroborative evidence to their probable correctness comes from two opposing witnesses. Father Lumsden reported to his superior, St Vincent, in 1657 that he had visited the Orkney islands, Caithness, Ross and Moray, where "there are but few

¹ *A list of Papists in ye Highlands*, 1698, in the Kirkwood Collection of MSS., General Assembly Library of the Church of Scotland, Edinburgh.

² Cf. Bellesheim, IV, p. 84.

Catholics." In 1672 the Bishop and Synod of Moray craved the Privy Council to be re-embursed for expenses entailed in enforcing decrees against "priests and papists in the diocese," and state that "the persons so dealt with number above a hundred and live distinct one from ane other in several sheriffdoms att sevinte myles distance." There were, therefore, only "above a hundred" in Ross, Inverness and Morayshire, for we may be sure they were all dealt with. As late as 1703 there were only seven Roman Catholics in Stratherrick, Strathglass and the Airds.¹ The people of Abertarff were all Protestant when their Lord MacDonald apostasised in the reign of Charles II and many of his people followed his example. In the wide district of Lochaber, which is so largely Roman Catholic to-day, there were only thirty according to the list quoted. The accuracy of this number is indirectly borne out by none other than the well-known Jesuit Father, James Macbreak. Writing to the General of his Society in August 1648 he gives details of the experiences of the priests in the army of Montrose in Lochaber on the eve of the battle of Inverlochy. He complains of the Camerons who inhabited Lochaber as "not being susceptible of piety." The region round the sources of the Ness he found to have a warm climate. "But," he proceeds, "if the region is warm, so also is the temper of the inhabitants, who are ardent Calvinists, having become obstinately imbued with these sentiments by a preacher who was sent here for banishment by King James the Sixth."² This preacher was the famous Robert Bruce whose evangelising success in those quarters is traditionally known.

Lochaber really defected to Rome after 1710, and although two priests itinerated there between 1710 and 1720 the truly effective agent was Father John M'Donald, a paternal descendant of the family of Clanranald and a native of Lochaber, who entered on his zealous enterprise in 1721. On arriving in Lochaber, according to Father Blundell, "he found only three families that practised the duties of the Catholic religion."³ A report to the General Assembly, however, attributes a good deal of success to his predecessors, the Irish priests, Peter M'Donald and Grigor Gordon, who operated from Kilmonivaig after a vacancy in the parish in 1710. These priests "held mass on week days and Sabbaths," "used no discipline," "harassed and molested Protestants," "forcing them to hear them by threatenings of various kinds," until by 1722 four hundred were perverted.⁴

In the wide parish of Ardnamurchan, which included Kilchoan, Sunart

¹ *Miscel. Maitland Club*, III, 387 *et seq.* For Abertarff, *cf. Memorial concerning Growth of Popery* in Royal Bounty MS. Minutes, 1726.

² Forbes Leith: *Memoirs*, I, 319.

³ Dom. Odo Blundell, O.S.B.: *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland*, p. 178.

⁴ *MS. Report for 1722*, Church of Scotland Library, Edinburgh.

and Moidart, and in 1630 was known as the parishes of Kilchoan and Eilean Finnan, circumstances were similar. In 1680 the Bishop of Argyle supplicated the Privy Council for warrant to grant their vacant stipends to some qualified persons to minister within them. The reasons given were; that owing to their inaccessibility and remoteness it is difficult "to plant" ministers there, and that on that account, there are "several disorders," such as children being unbaptized, "disorderly marriages contracted," and "the infection of Popery through the frequent repair of Popish priests."¹ It is clear that the Bishop was alarmed, but it was an alarm lest a Protestant population should be drawn to Rome. It affords no ground for assuming that Roman Catholic converts were even then predominant. Indeed, the eighth chief of Glengarry, Donald M'Donald, was himself a Protestant, till he was "reconciled" to the Church of Rome by Father Duggan in 1645. It may be assumed then that the people of Glengarry, following their chief, reverted to Rome under the influence complained of by Bishop Hector of Argyle. In the whole of Perthshire there were only sixty-one Roman Catholics in 1703.² During the period Roman Catholic priests also penetrated the Protestant county of Argyle as far as Morven, Mull and Tiree, but without any success.³ Morar and Knoydart were then two districts of the extensive parish of Glenelg. In 1755 their total population was 1816,⁴ and the northern portion, the most populous, was wholly Protestant. In Skye defections were few, and the figures quoted are practically confirmed by the report of the Bishop of the Isles already referred to. The same is true of the Lewis, North Uist, and the half of Benbecula. The only remaining parts are the Small Isles, Barra and South Uist, and in 1755 the combined population of these was only 4302—a considerable increase on the total of seventy years previous. Yet all these were not Roman Catholic; at least 1300 were Protestants.⁵

IV

After 1688 an annual survey of Roman Catholics in the parishes of Scotland was ordered under the authority of Church and State. The first, which were submitted between 1701 and 1705, show that over the Highland area, the number of Roman Catholics, including the additions during the reign of James VII and at the Revolution, was only 5417. Thus it becomes clear that the figures from both the Episcopal and Presbyterian sources are approximately the same as those for the reign of Charles II.

¹ *Reg. Priv. Coun. Scot.*, VI, III Ser., 547.

² *Miscel. Maitland Club*, III, 387 *et seq.*

⁴ *Old Statist. Acc.*, XVI, 267.

⁵ Cf. respective parishes in *O.S.A.*

³ *Ibid.*

Nor is this marked difference confined to the Highland figures : a similar disparity appears in the figures for the Lowlands. In 1684 there were in Urr 31 Roman Catholics, and in Kirkbean 5.¹ In 1703 there were within the bounds of the Presbytery of Edinburgh 156 Roman Catholics, and a number of these were titled fugitives from the north and persons bearing foreign names ; in Glasgow there were 4 ; in Urr, Traquair and Kirkbean, 47 ; in Kirkcubright, 107 ; Haddington, 24 ; Dumfries, 168 ; Peebleshire, 12 ; Forfar, 7 ; Aberbrothock, 2 ; Lincluden, 3 ; Cupar, 2 ; Lachmabon, 7 ; Presbytery of Paisley, 4 ; or a total of 527 against Leslie's 2000 for the Lowlands of Scotland.² In the barony of Athol, burgh of Dunbar, shire of Selkirk and burgh of Selkirk there were none. From the evidence adduced it seems therefore, clear, that the figures given by the erudite historian Bellesheim, for both Highlands and Lowlands, must be regarded as remotely distant from accuracy. Is there any reasonable explanation for the wide discrepancy between the two sets of figures ? It seems that one can be found in the fact that human nature, even when under the severe discipline of Loyola, is not proof against the lure of gold and glory. The papal prize of £5 (Scots) apiece for every convert,³ and the glory of the applause of the Cardinals, were the causes of the piling up by priests of lists of people who were in the main only sprinkled converts.

Another revision of history is necessary with reference to the popular notion that a belt of country lying between Braemar and Ardnamurchan and Benbecula and Barra had never cast off the Roman yoke. The first witnesses to the contrary are the Roman Catholic priests who in every conceivable disguise laboured in these areas, and always and exclusively report lists of " converted " or " reconciled heretics," the plain inference from which is that, whatever these people were before their conversion, they were not Roman Catholics. There was a flotsam in many parts which moved ecclesiastically with the ebb and flow of worldly interests, and that was particularly true of Aberdeenshire, but nowhere, except perhaps in parts of Morar (and even there " converts " were claimed) did the people remain in continuous allegiance to the Roman Church. It was in the Highlands and Islands that she recovered most ground, and there the area was narrow and circumscribed, but permanent. But it was *recovered* ground. This will appear from the number of chiefs who signed the " Statutes of Iona " in 1609,⁴ and from the imposing assemblage of chiefs and retainers who signed the Covenant in Inverness

¹ *Reg. Priv. Coun. Scot.*, XX, 397, 406.

² *Miscel. Maitland Club*, III, 387 et seq.

³ Kirkwood MS., *Report on State of Popery in Scotland*, 1713-37, Ch. of Scot. Library, Edinburgh. Cf. also Bellesheim, IV, 131.

⁴ Bartholomew : *The Statutes of Iona*, pp. 1 et seq.

on April 25, 1638, a day described by the Earl of Rothes in his *Relation* as the "joyfullest day that ever they saw, or even was sein in the North" when so many different clans with their chiefs met in peaceful concord.¹ If the principle of *cujus regio, ejus religio* operated here, as it certainly largely did, all the Highlands declared itself Protestant at one time or another. Apart from this, however we have conclusive proof that Uist and Barra were Protestant in the reign of Charles I. "In King Charles the first's time," says a reliable source, "Harris and Barra were one parish and the inhabitants were all Protestants. But after the Restoration, popish priests got in amongst them, and perverted them, and their then Protestant minister was a man inattentive to his character and duty."²

Here, then, began the Roman recovery, which was not due, as is alleged, to the exertions of banished Irish priests,³ but was the result of the labours of highly trained and specially chosen missionaries of different orders, who carried out the directions of their superiors and of the Bishops and Archbishops in Ireland with such zeal and slavish fidelity as show the ardour and ambition of the Counter Reformation in a mood of defiant earnestness. From the Islands the recovery spread to the Mainland, and it was always claimed as a recovery. Lands once Protestant were thus lost to the reformed Church, and apparently, permanently so. Accessions to Rome were not imposing in numbers, but they were from the native population, and were certainly not insignificant. The wonder is that they were not larger at a time which is described as the "most pitiful and the most revolting, and at the same time the sublimest and most impressive, page in the national history."⁴ The King was a Romanist, his Parliament was subservient, and the State Church was servile. That Rome's success was not greater and more serious was mainly due to what even the latitudinarian Burnet admits, namely, the Calvinism and Sabbath observance of the bulk of the Scottish common people. Perhaps there is a lesson in that for us of to-day.

¹ Rothes: *A Relation of Proceedings concerning the affairs of the Kirk of Scotland*, August, 1637 to July 1638 (*Bannatyne Club*), pp. 104, 105.

² Dr Hyndman's *Report* in MS. Minutes of General Assembly, 1761; Dr Walker's *Report*, *ibid.*, 1765.

³ *Old Statist. Acc.*, XIII, 338.

⁴ Hume Brown: *Surveys Scot. Hist.*, p. 69.